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*Tribalisme et Parti Unique en Afrique Noire: Esquisse d'une
Théorie Générale de l'intégration Nationale* by Lanciné Sylla

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Tribalisme et parti unique en Afrique noire: esquisse d'une théorie générale de l'intégration nationale. By Lanciné Sylla. (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques et Université Nationale de Côte d'Ivoire, 1977. Pp. 392. FF 95, paper.)

The African single-party system has been the subject of numerous publications, but in spite of the number of works now available, this new analysis of the "parti unique" by Lanciné Sylla of the University of Ivory Coast, is a valuable contribution. The author provides fresh insights and a breadth of coverage that makes this volume of use far beyond the small circle of students of African politics. He uses the contributions of the major writers in comparative politics and political development as well as most of the important African case studies. The works of French, British and American scholars are mined for ideas.

The first half of the book is a historical analysis of the growth of tribalism from the precolonial period to the present. Sylla emphasizes the effects upon this growth of the slave trade, of colonialism, of economic underdevelopment and differential rates of economic growth in various regions, and of universal suffrage. Quite correctly, Sylla notes that "tribalism" is the African variant of the worldwide problem of pluralism and he suggests that if properly considered, tribalism is of the same essence of patriotism and nationalism.

The second half of this book is an analysis of the origins, development, and inevitability of the one-party system, the "parti unique," in Africa. The parti unique successfully monopolizes the expression of the national political will (p. 26), but its existence does not necessarily mean that no other parties exist. The parti unique may be a single party or an overwhelmingly dominant party.

The parti unique as it now exists in Africa is not a solution to the problem of tribalism for it is a device by which a small group of leaders exploit the masses and a facade for ethnic domination. Instability occurs as ethnic groups compete for domination in a zero-sum game. This competition often leads to military involvement, another facet of tribalism.

Sylla views the parti unique as so African in nature, so appropriate to African political culture, that it is the means of rule most appropriate for Africa. But it will only operate effectively in an Africa without borders. The unity of African political culture will be the basis of the success of the parti unique in a united Africa, a unity of a common destiny and a common culture. States will continue to exist,

he argues, but with flexible borders that will mitigate the antagonisms of tribalism. The meaning of tribal identity will lose political significance in the larger entity of Africa. This is a weak point in the rigor of Sylla's analysis. An Africa without borders is a concept that has refused to be measured. Sylla fails us, for we are given no insights as to either the manner in which "l'Afrique sans frontières" will evolve from the Africa of today or as to steps to take to encourage such an evolution.

Sylla's thoughts are based on a comparative analysis of four states (Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Senegal and Uganda) which were selected on the basis of two criteria—their roles as historical pacesetters in African political development and the wide diversity within each of precolonial political cultures. These criteria are not sufficient to exclude other choices and one might argue that the sample he has selected is not representative. Too, other scholars might wish to select different criteria.

Of course, in a book that covers so much political history and so much of recent political science theory, one can find many points to dispute. For examples, Sylla argues that it is certain that parliamentary democracy encourages multipartyism, that tribalism *appeared* to die away during the colonial period, and that African leaders are somehow unlike leaders elsewhere in their inability to share power. Also, there is an occasional datedness or incompleteness, as when he refers—in the present tense—to ethnic domination in Nigeria's three regions or in his tendency to view the political history of francophone Cameroon as the political history of all of Cameroon.

The major value of this book is the author's ability to make a coherent whole of so many different aspects of history and political science. Sylla is not the first scholar to see the various relationships he discusses, but the clearness of his statement, the logic of his arguments, and the comprehensiveness of his view make reading this book so worthwhile.

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Marxism and the Metropolis: New Perspectives in Urban Political Economy. Edited by William K. Tabb and Larry Sawers. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. Pp. viii + 376. \$10.00, cloth; \$5.50, paper.)

Contemporary Marxist students of urban processes have had to approach their task without the benefit of specific groundwork laid